



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **VASQUEZ-MENDOZA FOUND GUILTY OF MURDERING DEA AGENT**

***Conviction is 4<sup>th</sup> stemming from 1994 murder of Special Agent Richard Fass***

PHOENIX – Agustin Vasquez-Mendoza was found guilty today in Maricopa County Superior Court for the first-degree murder of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent Richard E. Fass.

Vasquez-Mendoza was convicted on all counts including first degree murder and faces life in prison, with the possibility of parole after serving 25 years. Sentencing is set for 10:30 a.m. on October 6, 2006. On eight of the ten counts, the jury made a “dangerous” finding which allows for sentencing enhancements.

“DEA Special Agent Richard Fass was savagely murdered in June 1994. Today, the man who killed Agent Fass was convicted of his murder,” said DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy. “DEA relentlessly searched for this killer for six years, leading up to his capture and extradition from Mexico. Agent Fass lived his life to further justice, and today, a jury delivered U.S. justice to his killer.”

On June 30, 1994, Special Agent (SA) Fass, while operating in an undercover capacity in Glendale, Ariz., was shot and killed. Vasquez-Mendoza and his associates planned to rob SA Fass of \$160,000 in cash that they believed was for the purchase of methamphetamine. Vasquez-Mendoza and three additional defendants, Rafael Rubio-Mendez, Juan Vasquez-Rubio and Eduardo Aceves-Vasquez were identified as being involved in planning the robbery and subsequent murder.

Vasquez-Mendoza managed to evade capture and fled to Mexico whereas the other three co-defendants were arrested, charged and later convicted and sentenced for their part in the murder of SA Fass.

The manhunt for Vasquez-Mendoza was one of the largest undertaken by both Mexico and the United States as he was eventually placed on the FBI’s Top Ten Most-Wanted List. Phoenix DEA Special Agents immediately began searching for the fugitive while the Glendale Police Department homicide unit initiated their murder investigation against Rafael Rubio-Mendez and Juan Vasquez-Rubio.

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The DEA, FBI and the Department of State offered a reward up to 2.2 million dollars for his arrest, which took place on July 9, 2000 in the State of Puebla, Mexico. Vasquez-Mendoza was later extradited to the United States on January 29, 2005.

“This is a great day for law enforcement,” said U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton. “The verdict represents the tenacity and doggedness which DEA and all law enforcement will pursue when an agent is killed in the line of duty. Our thoughts are with the family of Agent Fass.”

“Today’s verdict has been a long time coming. The conviction is tremendously gratifying for agents past and present, as well as the family of Richard Fass,” said Phoenix DEA Special-Agent-in-Charge Timothy J. Landrum. “Today’s verdict serves notice that the world-wide efforts of the DEA will be brought to bear on all those who harm or kill DEA Special Agents and that those individuals will be brought to justice. “I congratulate the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office for their outstanding prosecution in this case.”

“Special Agent Fass made the ultimate sacrifice for our community. We hope that this verdict will bring some closure for his family, but we want them to know that we will not forget him or his sacrifice that he made for us.” said Glendale Police Chief Steve Conrad.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kevin Rapp and Keith Vercauteren, both of whom are cross-deputized as Special Deputy County Attorneys were responsible for the prosecution of Vasquez-Mendoza.

Agencies involved in this investigation include DEA, FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Marshal’s Service, Maricopa County Attorney’s Office, Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office, Glendale Police Department, Phoenix Police Department and law enforcement authorities in Mexico.

***For interviews with the Fass family, please contact DEA Public Information Officer, Ramona Sanchez at (602) 664-5725.***

CASE NUMBER: CR1994-006023 (Maricopa County Superior Court)

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